



Litter Picks

Electronic Newsletter

September 2006

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Enhancement

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DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

Please note our new P.O. Box and Zip Code.

Welcome to Litter Picks, a look at litter prevention news in the Commonwealth and across the nation. We hope that some of this information is helpful to you in your programs, and hope you'll help us with news from your area related to litter prevention and awareness. Had a successful clean up event? Recognized companies or citizens for their clean up efforts? Let us know by sending this information to Sheila Barnett at

smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov.

National Public Lands Day – September 30

National Public Lands Day is celebrated by volunteers pitching in to improve and enhance public lands across the county. Litter pick ups play a large role in environmental enhancements and will be taking place along the Appalachian Trail at the George Peris Cemetery in **Blacksburg**, at seven different parks in **Arlington**, along the beaches of Assateague Island in **Chincoteague** and on Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuge in **Cape Charles**. **Fort Belvoir** Lake is scheduled to be picked up. **Fort Lee**, **Fort Picket** and **Fort Story** will also be celebrating National Public Lands Day in September with litter pick ups and other beautification and environmental enhancement projects.

Colonial Beach, McLean, Norfolk, Lorton, Prince William County, Chesapeake, Edinburgh, Charles City, Quantico, Luray, Yorktown, and Lanexa all have listed events. Go to: www.publiclandsday.org and click on "Choose Your State" to see the list of National Public Lands Day events that are registered for the Commonwealth and to find the local coordinator for each event.

The Virginia Clean Waterways website also has a list of cleanups taking place in September and October. Check out their website by going to: <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/iccsitesva06.htm>

Elizabethan Fairy Tale

A magical princess dons a purple-and-gold skirted gown with a black bodice to tell her story complete with a canvas backdrop and a treasure chest with props to enthrall her audience as she tells her story of visiting the bottom of the Elizabeth River and meeting the underwater creatures who are struggling to survive in the polluted waters. A pelican comes along and flies her to schools to visit with children who are planting sea grass and helping to clean up the river. The princess's story is called "A River of Hope."

The Princess is really an outreach programs manager of the Elizabeth River Project. The program teaches good river stewardship and Ms. Robin Dunbar is available as an outreach project for festivals, libraries and schools throughout the Commonwealth. Contact Robin Dunbar at (757) 399-7487 or rdunbar@elizabethriver.org

To learn more about the Elizabeth River Project, go to: <http://www.elizabethriver.org/index.asp>

Did You Know?

- ✓ Litter Prevention and Recycling grants have been calculated for eligible jurisdictions for FY 2007 funding, and grant award processing has begun. DEQ will be rewarding \$1,560,749 in grants to jurisdictions for their litter prevention and recycling program activities.
- ✓ The Virginia Council For Litter Prevention and Recycling Council will hold their next meeting on September 28 at the Henrico County Training Center 10:30 a.m. Contact Deb Van Leer at (540)347-6811, Ext. 18 or deb.vanleer@fauquiercounty.gov
- ✓ The **Newport News** Sheriff's Office uses an inmate (free) labor program. The inmate labor program is handled by the Newport News Sheriff's Office. For more information contact their Public Relations Officer Lieutenant Kathleen Carey at (757) 926-8747 or visit their web site at: http://www.newport-news.va.us/sheriff/about/contact_us.html
- ✓ The **Orange County** Litter Control Committee created their own logo to accompany monthly articles that they send to the newspaper. It's a picture of an orange taking a bubble bath and has the caption; Keep Orange Squeaky Clean. Monthly articles have included such topics as how to recycle and information about the local adopt-a-highway program. Contact Laura Carter at (540) 672-0790 or sullaura@verizon.net
- ✓ Keep **Loudoun** Beautiful hosted a litter cleanup in August along the Potomac River. Thirty-six volunteers removed 66 tires and 40 bags of trash totaling 2,820 pounds. Contact Tony Hayes at (703)771-5514 or dhayes@loudoun.gov
- ✓ **Central Virginia Waste Management Authority (CVWMA)** has a new Executive Director, Kimberly Hynes. Ms. Hynes contact information is: (804) 359-8413 ext. 11 or khynes@cvwma.com
- ✓ **Henry County** and the **Town of Martinsville** host two pick ups a year. The spring clean up was so successful with volunteers collecting 10 tons of trash and cleaning up an illegal dump site, that they are making their fall pick up a two-day event. Their fall pick up is scheduled for October 6 – 7. Contact Lois Christensen at (276) 634-4674 or gateway@co.henry.va.us

Litter Picks Continued

Harvest Greening Grant a Success for Henry County and the City of Martinsville

When a non-profit hospital building was sold in Henry County, the proceeds became available for local organizations in the form of grants to improve Henry County and the City of Martinsville.

Gateway Streetscape Foundation applied for and received a two-year grant to assist with litter removal and landscaping. The greening grant came under the welfare category. Inmates needed to learn skills that they could use to find work once they got out of jail, so in addition to picking up litter, they are taught landscaping and horticultural skills.

This became a win-win situation. The inmates were learning new skills, and citizens were pleased to see less trash and more beautification in their community. There have been two teams of inmates with 4 – 6 serving on a team. One team has served the county and the other the city. In their first year, the Henry County team picked up 4,561 bags of trash and the Martinsville City Team collected 651 bags of trash.

Even though the grant has ended, the inmates have continued to work on teams to pick up litter, landscape, and learn horticultural skills. Henry County, seeing how successful this program has been, is presently looking to hire a full time litter coordinator and implement their version of the Assign-a-Highway program. The City of Martinsville has already hired a person to concentrate on litter control. For more information, contact Lois Christensen at (276) 634-4674 or gateway@co.henry.va.us

Adopt-a-Highway News and Illegal Signage Advise

According to the Virginia Department of Transportation's most recent statistics, there are more than 6,800 Adopt-a-Highway groups in the Commonwealth of Virginia and more than 13,000 miles of road are adopted. This equates to about a quarter of the state-maintained roads. Litter removal done by volunteers has an estimated annual value of \$3,000,000.

Many volunteer groups schedule pick ups in the spring and fall. In addition to picking up litter along the ground, people wonder what to do with signs that they find stuck in the median (popsicle signs) and tacked to street signs and electricity and telephone polls. VDOT suggests that volunteers first check with their local VDOT residency to see if any signs in their adopted stretch have been placed legally and if the owner of the signs has a permit to put signs in that area. If not, volunteers may remove illegal signs.

VDOT advises volunteers not to remove signs outside of their adopted stretches of road. Instead, contact the local VDOT residency and request that a VDOT maintenance crew remove the illegal signage. You can contact the local VDOT residency by calling or emailing the local Adopt-a-Highway Coordinator by locating him/her on the VDOT Coordinator list at:

<http://www.virginiadot.org/info/service/prog-aah-coords.asp>

Or by calling (800) PRIDE VA 744-3382.

To remove signs from poles, VDOT recommends wearing heavy gloves in case there are sharp edges and wearing safety glasses.

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Portfolios for a Beautiful Campus

Each school in **Russell County** has an opportunity to be recognized for their efforts in maintaining attractive school grounds and buildings. They also have opportunities to be recognized for conservation efforts, and environmental enhancement efforts through school projects and activities.

Each participating school is required to maintain a portfolio to show the projects and activities that have been initiated and completed throughout the year. Activities can include landscaping, litter prevention initiatives, recycling efforts, and environmental projects conducted by classes and clubs.

For more information about the school beautification program, contact Angela White with the Russell County Environmental Council at 276-889-0968, Ext. 127 or angela-white@va.nacdn.net

What's New in Henrico County

Megan Brown, the Litter Coordinator for Henrico County sent DEQ a DVD featuring Henrico's Because We Care Program along with a letter telling us what is new in Henrico County. She writes:

The DVD is a 13-minute program on Keep Henrico Beautiful that was just made for Henrico Cable Channel 17. It features the Because We Care litter pickup program, educational programs, Land Lover/Clean Business Awards, the James River Annual Cleanup, and Christmas Tree Recycling. It is a really nice promotional piece for Keep Henrico Beautiful.

The Pick-Me-Up is the first newsletter for the volunteers of the Because We Care Program. It will go out quarterly to all of the road/school/community/park adopters in Henrico. With the second issue we will send it out electronically to those who have provided their e-mail. My hope is that it will keep everyone informed of current litter issues and provide answers to their "Frequently Asked Questions." Sending it out quarterly will also be a great reminder to schedule their next pick-up.

For more information about Henrico's litter program, contact Megan Brown at 804-501-4502, Ext. 4 or bro77@co.henrico.va.us

Hampton's Cigarette Litter Pilot Program Reports Success

The **Hampton Clean City Commission** and the Coliseum Central Business Improvement District have found that given proper cigarette disposal options and education can make a difference in people's cigarette littering habits.

Results have shown that by providing smokers with portable ash trays, educational literature, and by placing posters in local establishments that cigarette litter decreased in the targeted area by 22 percent.

Contact Debbie Blanton at (757) 727-6394 or hccc@hampton.gov